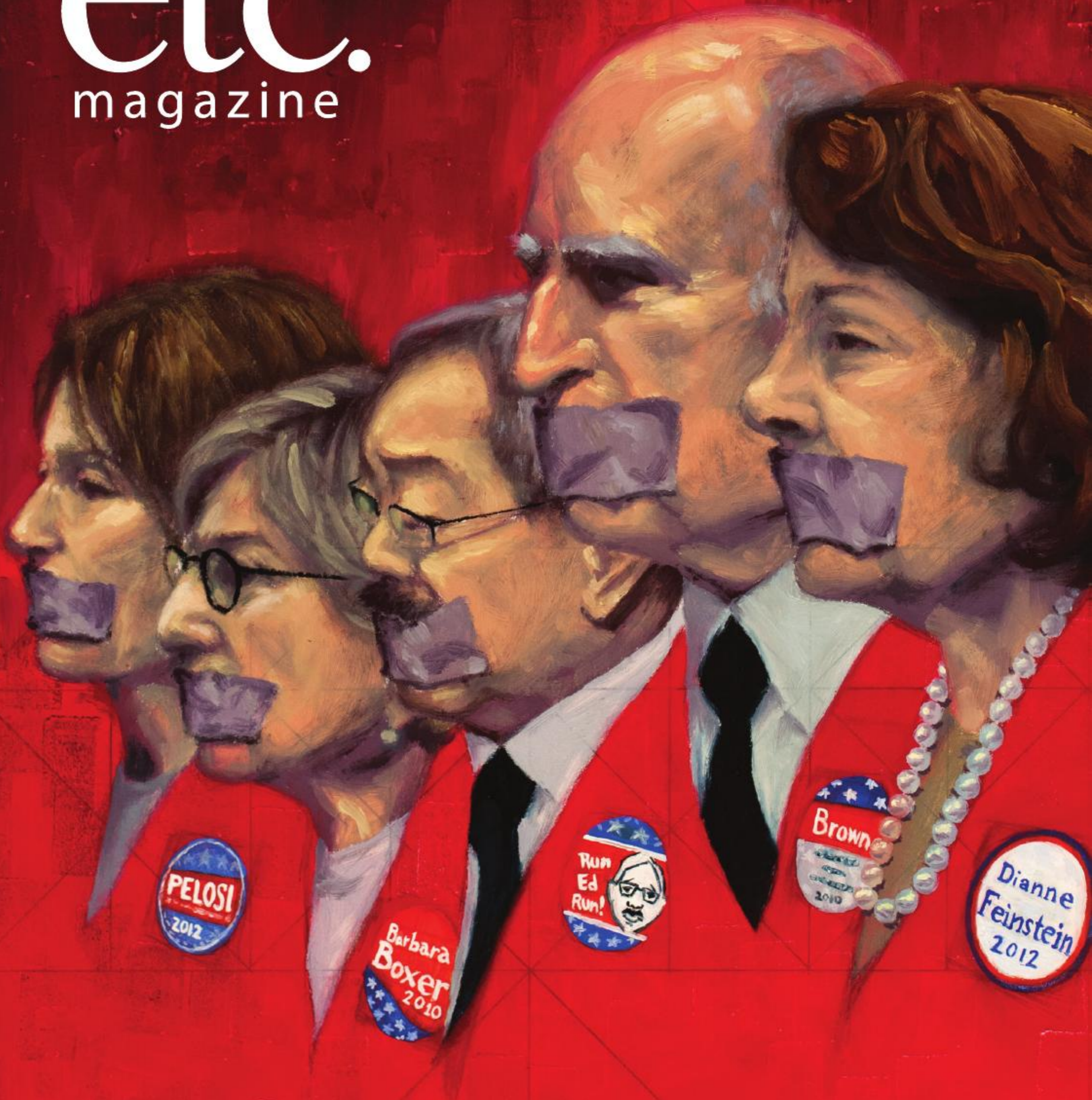


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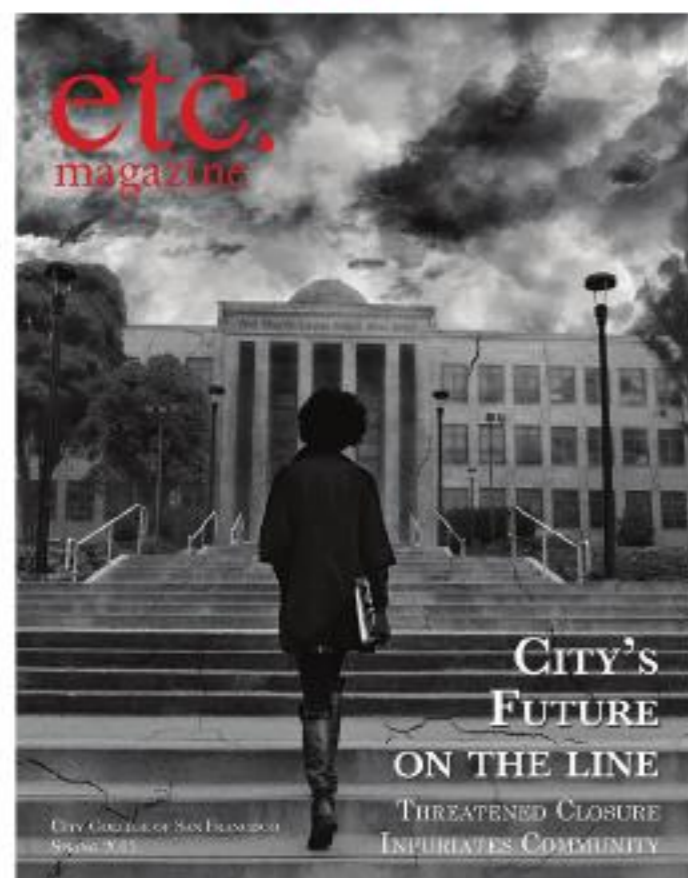
magazine



**WHO WILL SPEAK FOR CITY?**  
Political heavyweights mum on CCSF crisis

Brian Kinchei  
2013

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*The Spring 2013 issue of  
Etc. Magazine available online.*

#### OUR MISSION:

Etc. Magazine is written, edited, photographed and designed by Journalism 29 students at City College of San Francisco. Our goal is to cover the students, faculty, staff, administration and alumni of the college and the surrounding community. We strive for the highest standards of journalistic excellence because our product reflects not only upon the individual students who produce it, but also the Journalism Department and the college.

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# etc. magazine

## Editorial

#### EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Daniel Raile  
[raile.daniel@gmail.com](mailto:raile.daniel@gmail.com)

#### MANAGING EDITOR

Kelcie Walther  
[kpwalther@gmail.com](mailto:kpwalther@gmail.com)

#### PRODUCTION MANAGER

Robin Sherrer  
[robinsherrer@gmail.com](mailto:robinsherrer@gmail.com)

#### CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Michael Hall  
Ivan Huang  
William Lankford  
Leith Mahoney-Maver  
Charles Penix  
Daniel Raile  
Khaled Sayed  
Greg Zeman

## Administration

#### MAGAZINE ADVISER

Tom Graham  
[tg\\_journalist@comcast.net](mailto:tg_journalist@comcast.net)

## Art & Production

#### DESIGN DIRECTOR

Cesar Sanchez  
[cesardsanchez@gmail.com](mailto:cesardsanchez@gmail.com)

#### PHOTO EDITOR

Gordon Tillotson  
[gordontillotson@gmail.com](mailto:gordontillotson@gmail.com)

#### CONTRIBUTING ILLUSTRATOR

Brian Lei  
[blei1990@yahoo.com](mailto:blei1990@yahoo.com)

#### CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

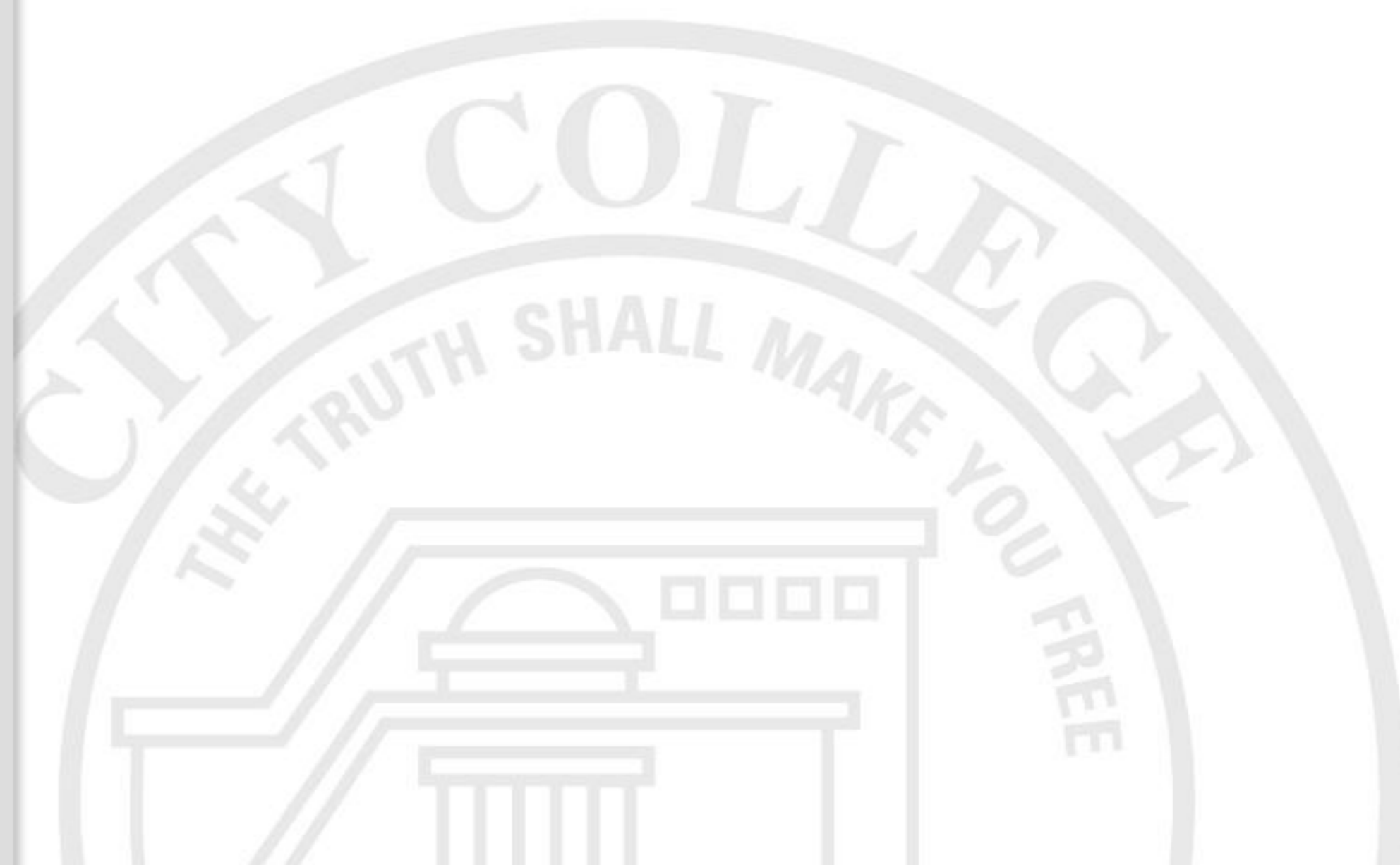
Ryan Legaspi  
Khaled Sayed  
Gordon Tillotson

#### GRAPHIC DESIGN & PRODUCTION ARTISTS

Gustavo Casillas  
Cherisha Leung  
Cesar Sanchez

#### PRINTING

DPI Printing  
[www.dpi-sf.com](http://www.dpi-sf.com)  
[Sanjay@dpi-sf.com](mailto:Sanjay@dpi-sf.com)

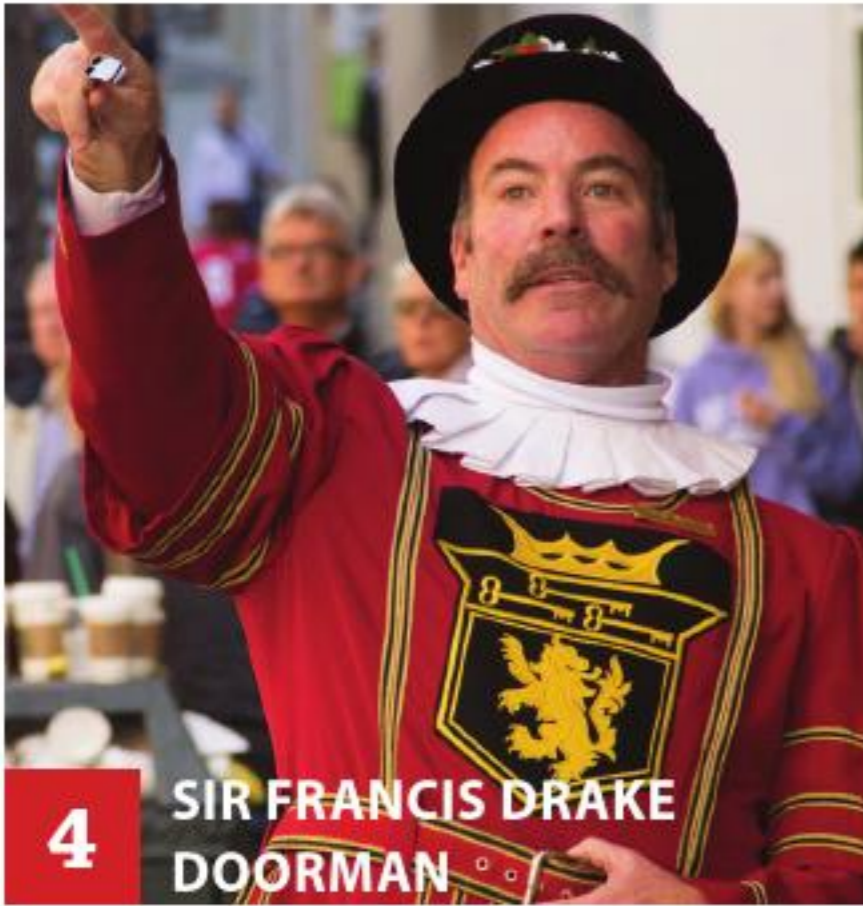


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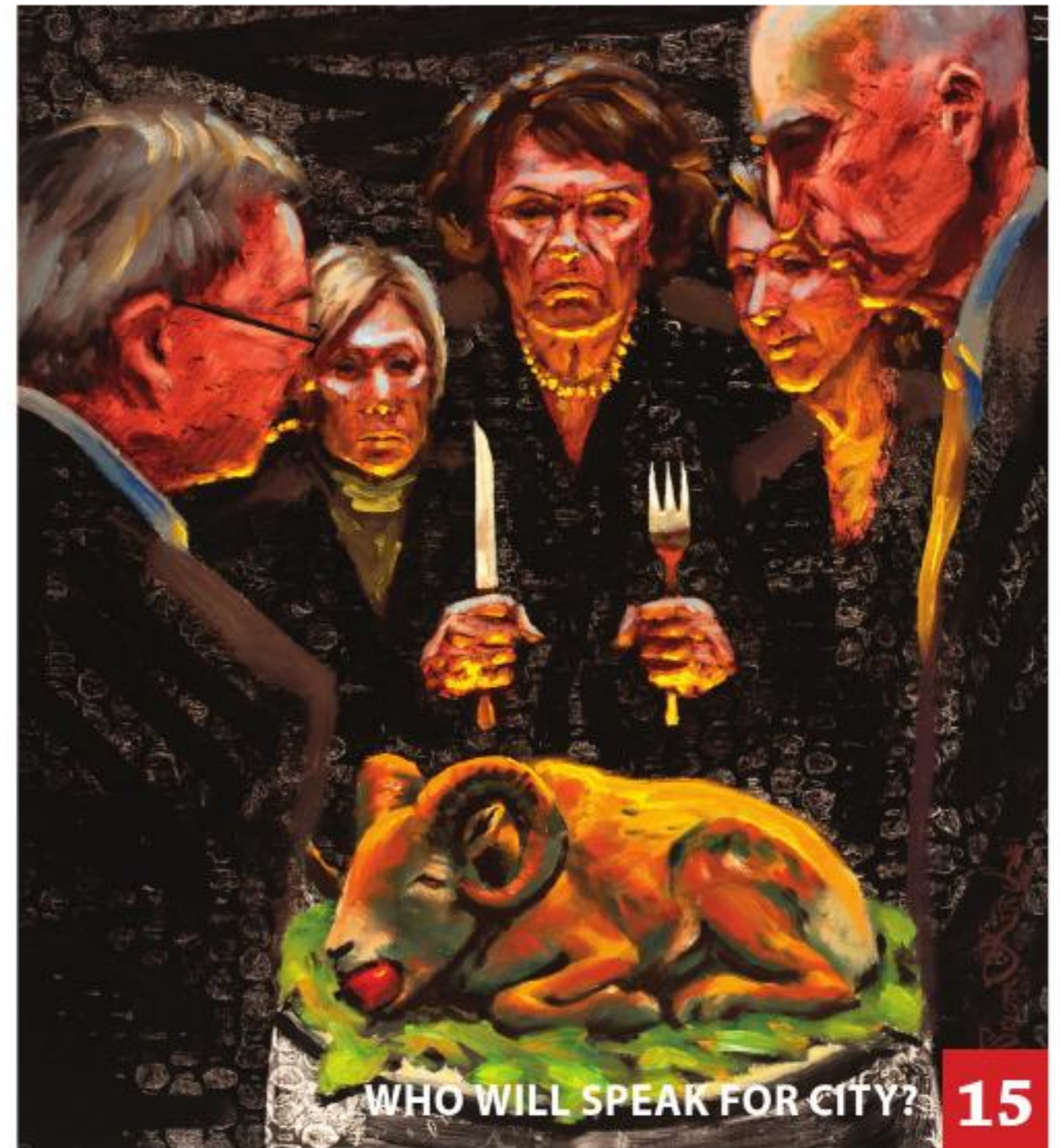


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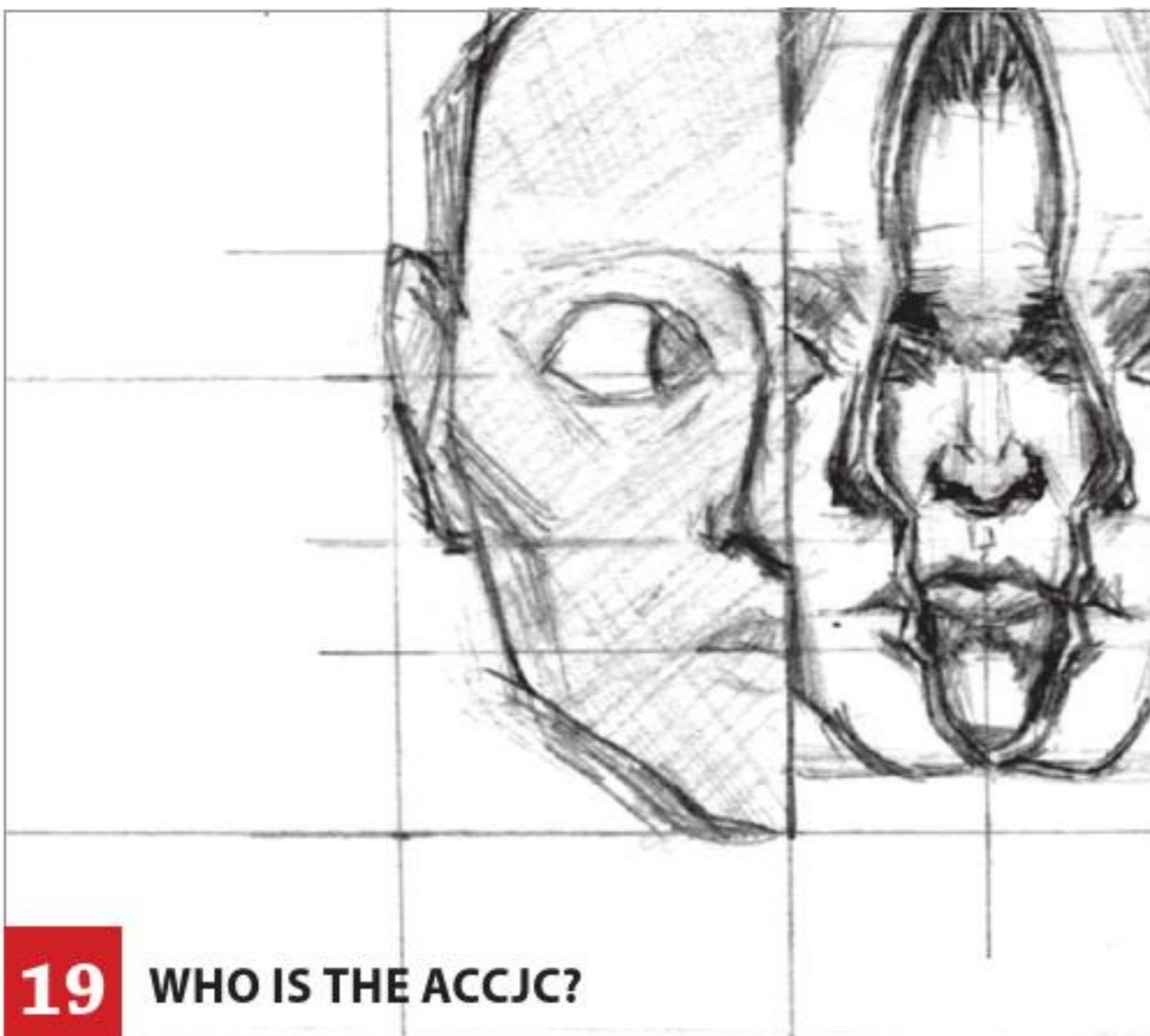


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# EDITOR'S NOTE

When the Etc. Magazine staff first gathered in August, it was clear there was one issue standing out from all the rest. All of us—writers, editors, designers, illustrators, photographers, broadcasters—knew that we needed to cover the ongoing accreditation crisis facing the school. We asked ourselves what we could add to a debate that has been hashed out for over a year in the press, at the podium and online.

In our spring edition, we focused on the question of what would happen if City College closed. When we came back this fall, that outcome was looking even more likely.

Over the course of several discussions, it became clear that many of us were troubled by the lack of decisive leadership from the city's top officials in regard to the school's situation. Illustrator Brian Lei was listening attentively while sketching in the back of the room. The next time we convened, he presented us with a pencil drawing of the piece that we knew immediately would become our cover.

The duct-taped mouths of our city leaders captured the essence of our concerns. The image is deliberately provocative, but we decided the best use of our pens, cameras and software was to encourage action and clear speech from those who could come to the aid of the school, but haven't.

Our message to them is best said by Abraham Lincoln: "You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today."

Over the course of the semester, we gathered opinions and research and set out to establish a unique angle from which to approach the subject. We hope you enjoy our coverage, and that this edition of Etc. showcases what City College does well—how students from different departments collaborate and what our students are capable of. Whether you agree with us or not, we hope at least to start a conversation—please email us, or visit our webpage to let us know what you think!

Sincerely,



**Daniel Raile**  
Editor-in-Chief



**Javier Vasquez**  
ESL/GED High School Diploma



*"If City College closed I wouldn't be able to get my diploma and get more knowledge."*



**Jaime Quintana**  
Computer Engineering



*"City College prepares students for the future. If it were to close people would be out on the streets."*



**Dimitri Kourouniotis**  
Digital Animation



*"I would be devastated if City College closed its doors. City has helped me change in a very positive way."*

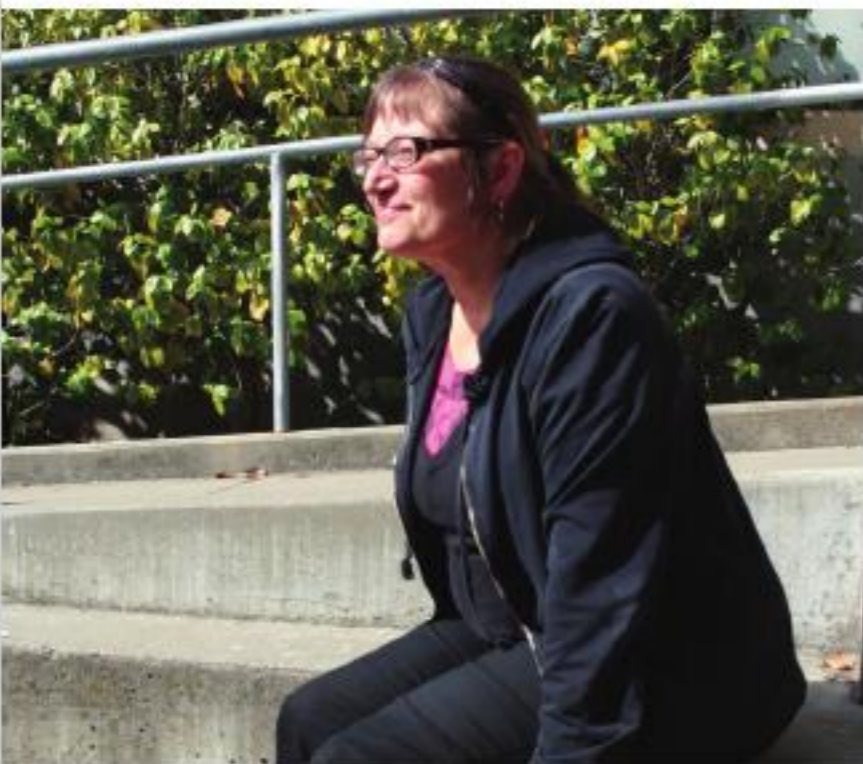
# Humans of City College

*Photography and text by Gordon Tillotson, Khaled Sayed & Cherisha Leung*

City College of San Francisco provides a staggering variety of programs to a remarkably diverse city. This semester, our photographers combed the school's campuses to document that diversity. We were inspired by the approach of Brandon Stanton's "Humans of New York" project, which attempts to create a "photographic census" of New York City. Our goal was to put a face to the community that stands to lose out in City College's current accreditation crisis. We asked students what City means to them and how its closure would impact their lives.



**Karen Fabec**  
Graphic Design & Film Studies



*"City College has been a big part of my life, it deserves to remain here forever to continue to do for others what it has done for me."*



**Alana Vongposey**  
English



*"City is a great place to go to class and it would be a waste to close it when so many people need an affordable college."*



**Olga Steele**  
Biology/Chemistry



*"(City College) means everything and I can't afford to take any classes that aren't accredited."*



**Elyse Watts**  
Computer Science



*"I will cry if City closes. City College has awesome teachers, way better than any other community college."*



**Laura Vail**  
Undeclared



*"I like taking classes at City College because it is affordable and I like to learn new things."*



**Laith Hassan**  
Industrial Design



*"Many of my friends go here and I knew it was going to be a good experience."*



# SIR FRANCIS DRAKE DOORMAN

*City's most photographed person*

*By Leith Mahoney-Maver / Photography by Khaled Sayed*

To say Tom Sweeney stands out in a crowd would be an understatement. For almost 40 years, "the most photographed man in San Francisco" has been as much an icon here as the cable car, Golden Gate Bridge and the Transamerica Pyramid. His image is captured by tourists, hotel patrons and local residents about 500 times a day.

Dressed in a 16th century Elizabethan era bright red velvet frock coat, knee-high socks, black patent leather shoes, and a black Beefeater's hat, Sweeney looks like he's guarding the crown jewels. But the Queen's guards usually don't whistle for cabs or open car doors.

His uniform, a \$3,000 custom-made staple for all Sir Francis Drake Hotel doormen, features a wide, pressed white collar, white gloves, gold fabric lining and a red waistcoat emblazoned with the gold Drake family coat of arms. The uniform, modeled after the Tower of London's royal guards, is a source of pride—it makes him feel special, like a protector...a hero.

The hotel doorman has been on the job for 37 years. Longer than any of his predecessors.

"In 1981, that's when I really knew," says the City College alumnus about when he realized he wanted to make his doorman job a life-long career.

"Two people were checking into the hotel, and these robbers came by and stole their luggage and ran. I ran down the block and tackled the two robbers at once in my uniform."

Later that year, Mayor Dianne Feinstein recognized Sweeney with the "Nick of Time Award." The new honor was also bestowed on San Francisco 49ers quarterback Joe Montana that year.

The owners and management of the Sir Francis Drake Hotel, also impressed by his bravery, rewarded him with an all-expenses-paid trip to Acapulco, Mexico.

"On the third day of the trip my friend and I were on this beach, and a guy and a girl were drowning... I swam out and saved the girl's life. ('CBS News' anchor) Dan Rather had it on The World News."

Since Mexico, Sweeney has had many other opportunities to travel around the world, one of the many perks of his prestigious position in the hotel industry.

The San Francisco native and graduate of Riordan High School (class of '77), walked across Phelan Avenue after he graduated from high school and enrolled in City College's Culinary Arts and Hospitality Studies program. When he graduated in 1979, he was in a good position to get a job in the industry. But at that time his long-term goal was to become a cop or firefighter, like many of his friends.

Sweeney first donned his Sir Francis Drake Beefeater uniform as a summer job,

when cable car rides to Fisherman's Wharf cost only 50 cents.

"My mom knew the general manager," he says, noting he never planned to turn the entry-level position into a career. In a way, he was overqualified.

**"I'm a greeter, porter, guide, ringmaster, constable and valet all in one."**

—Tom Sweeney

A wife, two stepchildren and a five dollar and fifty cent increase in cable car fares later, Sweeney has reached local celebrity status.

He has shaken hands with every president since Gerald Ford—"Reagan had the strongest handshake," he says—and met numerous celebrities, including John Travolta and Britney Spears.

He even has his own celebratory plaque on Powell Street, directly in front of the doors of the hotel where he still whistles for cabs countless times a day.

Sweeney says his time at City College was well spent. After all, it helped prepare him for a lifetime job.

"(City College) was a great school," he says, noting that when he went here it was one of the top hotel and restaurant schools in the country—second only to Cornell.

The Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management program at City College, founded in 1936 by Cornell alumni John and Hilda Watson Gifford, is now the oldest two-year hospitality program in the country.

Sweeney says he's the only doorman to come out of the hospitality management program.

"Also," he points out, "when I went there it was free."

Lynda Hirose, program advisor for the Culinary Arts and Hospitality Studies program, likes the fact that Sweeney has become such a celebrity.

"I think he's a personality that a lot of people can relate to. It's a good testament to our program."

Hirose, who has been teaching for the Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management program since 1989, worries about the pos-

sible closure of the school and how it could affect the San Francisco hospitality industry. And she wonders where people like Tom Sweeney, who are interested in culinary arts and hotel management, would get their training if the college did close.

"We provide such qualified students who are really motivated and who are willing to make hospitality a career. Taking our program away would put a hole in that," she said.

City College opened a door for Sweeney, who now literally opens doors for others. One of about 100 doormen in the city, his work is less about holding doors than it is giving out directions, helping with luggage, and posing for photographs.

"The San Francisco Chronicle voted me the most photographed guy in San Francisco," he boasts. He shares the stage with two other Beefeater colleagues, who haven't been on the job as long.

Dealing with tourists four days a week, 8 hours a day, can be taxing. Rain or shine, Sweeney's on his feet in front of the hotel year-round. He answers questions and gives directions all day long.

"I'm a greeter, porter, guide, ringmaster, constable and valet all in one," Sweeney says.

He estimates that he gets asked where the



▲ Sweeney cuts a sharp figure through any crowd in his 16<sup>th</sup> Century Beefeater garb.

cable car stop is about 25,000 times a year.

"Where's Fisherman's Wharf?" and "Where's the nearest ATM?" are close behind.

Sweeney's long tenure with the Sir Francis Drake and the Kimpton Hotel chain has earned him respect from his colleagues and employer.

"It's a very prestigious job," he says. "I get to travel all over the world with my wife and kids. I wouldn't trade this job for anything."

Sweeney and his wife, who works in a private nightclub in the city, live in the Richmond District and have been married for more than 20 years.

His two stepchildren didn't follow in his footsteps. His daughter is a school teacher, and his son is an electrician.

"(Sweeney) is always on," says Jim Gross, the general manager of the Sir Francis Drake Hotel. "It's truly a unique thing in our industry. He is just a kind spirit who understands customer service."

Gross says Sweeney's unlimited energy and optimism is a gift.

"If I could clone it and give it to people, I would," Gross says.

Long after the introduction of automated doors, the Sir Francis Drake doorman continues to be the face of the hotel.

"You know, the Beefeaters are the first

impression of the hotel... They always have a smile on their face," Gross points out.

Gross is equally confident that, even after Sweeney retires, the tradition of the Beefeater doormen at the hotel will continue. But retirement is not on this doorman's mind. Not for at least five years, he says.

As for the uniform, neither Gross nor Sweeney seem to know where it originated.

"They got (the uniform) about 50 years ago, and I think it was just to distinguish them from the other hotels...before it was just a basic long black coat," said Sweeney.

Regardless of the attire's origins, Beefeaters man the hotel doors 24 hours each day.

"They'll be here forever," says Gross about the doorman tradition at the Sir Francis Drake, which is now 85 years old. "It's just always been that way."

Behind the scenes, Sweeney is a low-key family man who roots for the 49ers and is a passionate runner. He's competed in 28 marathons and each May he runs in the annual Bay to Breakers race, which he's run several times in his Beefeater's uniform.

And, thanks to the job, which Sweeney says he "wouldn't give up for anything," he paid off his nearly \$1 million Richmond District home by his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday and recently bought himself a new BMW.

Regardless of the pomp and circumstance of the uniform he wears during his 32-hour workweek, Sweeney's personal style is much more casual.

At home, he says, "I am always in jeans and sweats. I'm not a big fashion statement guy. When you wear a Beefeater outfit for 38 years, you're just ready to get it off, you know?"

Not to say that Sweeney has always found his job relaxing.

One thing he's learned is he's got to stay calm, because so many things are happening at one time at his job.

With the phones ringing and people wanting to take his picture, things can get hectic.

"I've got 200 people wanting to check in and 200 people checking out and the cable cars come every nine minutes," he says, "so you've got to keep the cars moving."

Yet he says he loves the stress of the job. "As the years go on, you learn the stress can be fun," he says. "It's when you really achieve."

You can see the most revered doorman in San Francisco giving out directions, lifting suitcases, opening doors and whistling for cabs in front of the Sir Francis Drake most Sundays from 7am to 3pm, and weekdays from 3pm until 11pm. ■



▲ Tom Sweeney estimates he is asked directions to the nearest cable car stop 25,000 times a year.

# ROBERT AGRELLA'S INSIGHT INTO CITY'S ACCREDITATION CRISIS

An interview with the Special Trustee

By Kelcie Walther

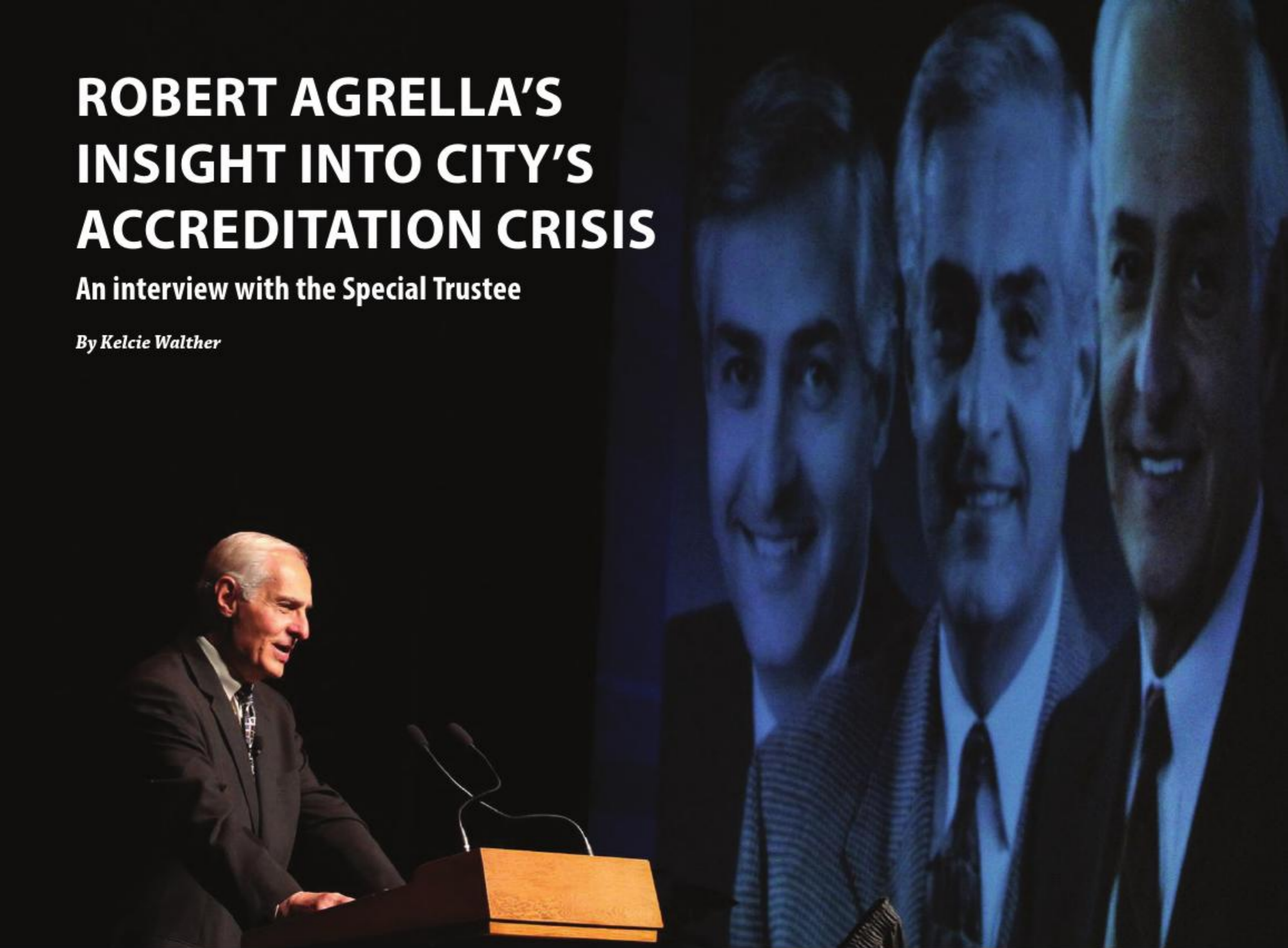


Photo: Courtesy of Crista Jeremiason / The Santa Rosa Press Democrat

Robert Agrella is sitting at a conference table in his bare-walled, second floor Conlan Hall office at the Ocean Campus. The white-haired 70-year-old is dressed in a starched white shirt and tie, his navy blue blazer hangs on a coat tree behind him. His nearby desk is bare—except for a red apple.

Last July, the chancellor for California Community Colleges appointed Agrella “special trustee” in charge of City College of San Francisco. He accepted the position, risking his reputation to save the college, which is threatened with loss of accreditation and closure in July 2014.

Agrella has put himself in one of the most stressful situations of his long, distinguished career.

His critics say he has too much power and doesn’t represent the best interests of the college community.

His supporters believe he’s the 78-year-old institution’s only hope.

With a bachelor’s and master’s in math and a doctorate in education, Agrella has over 40 years of experience in the California community college system.

In May 2012, he retired after 22 years as superintendent of the Sonoma County Junior College District and president of Santa Rosa Junior College.

After only six weeks of retirement, however, Agrella was back—this time as an arbiter in one of the community college system’s biggest controversies.

“My wife says that I failed retirement 101 miserably,” he says.

Agrella appears undaunted in spite of all the pressures he faces.

“My primary job,” he says, “is to keep City College open—open and accredited.”

Although he looks weary, his voice is strong and unwavering. His demeanor is convincing. He is confident City College will not close under his watch.

Some people are concerned that his uncompromising, by-the-book approach may prove to be a detriment.

Etc. Magazine interviewed him at his office in November for an inside update on the accreditation crisis.

**etc.** What is it like being in the hot seat, with everyone depending on you to solve City College's current accreditation crisis?

**RA** Well, it's a little uncomfortable at times, but I feel I've been getting a lot of support from faculty, staff, students and certainly the administrative staff. So that certainly puts a counteracting force on the stresses that we are under. I take the job extremely seriously.

**etc.** What is the biggest challenge you have faced so far as the special trustee? Any particularly difficult decisions you have had to make?

**RA** There's no single challenge that comes to my mind. I think every challenge has its own difficulty level. But every challenge is just that—a challenge. Because you're making decisions that are affecting people's lives. You're affecting faculty, classified staff, administrative staff, students and community members' lives. I take that very seriously. A lot of people think "Oh, Agrella doesn't have a heart," but Agrella has a family, Agrella feels all of these things—I'm not feeling it in my pocket book, but that doesn't mean that I'm not feeling it elsewhere. I've lived and worked in community colleges now for over 40 years. That is and has been my life. I've had a great career and my oldest son is a full-time student at a community college. So I know what he is going through, buying his books and coming to me and saying "can I borrow some money?" You know, that kind of stuff. Every decision is a difficult decision. I don't know that I could pick just one.

**etc.** What is your sense about how the whole crisis will turn out?

**RA** I think it's going to turn out fine, frankly. I wouldn't be devoting this kind of time, we wouldn't be bringing new people in—a new chancellor, new vice chancellors, other hirings—we wouldn't be doing that if we didn't feel that we were going to maintain accreditation and move on to another level. Quite often, facing difficult struggles like this institution is going through now, you emerge a stronger and better institution.

**etc.** What is it about City College that makes it so important to San Francisco?

**RA** Well I think it's become an integral part of the educational and social fabric of San Francisco and this community supports City College tremendously. So it's just extremely important. I couldn't imagine a San Francisco without City College, quite frankly. I didn't feel that way when I came here originally. I wasn't expecting to see the college embedded in the community as much as it is. It's a pleasant surprise to me.

**etc.** What are the ACCJC sanctions primarily about?

**RA** Finance and governance are the two areas that these sanctions are really centered at. That's where the institution's major issues are.

**etc.** What basic steps are being taken to keep the college open?

**RA** One of the steps that is very important is the stabilization of the senior administrative staff. That means a permanent chancellor, permanent vice chancellors, permanent deans. We've made tremendous progress. We have filled all the major top leadership positions in the institution. That's a major step because without that you don't have stability and you don't have continuity of thought. We've established the "roadmap to success" online so people can see what the progress of the institution is, which is a necessity when you're talking with the commission. You have to be able to demonstrate, not just say, that you have accomplished something. A major step that has to be taken is the development of a really good marketing and communications plan to help raise enrollment. We're in the process of developing one. We've developed a draft and are now reviewing that draft.

**etc.** Where are we in the appeals process?

**RA** We're not in the appeals process yet. We are in the review process. The review process is when you ask (the commission) to review the decision that they made based on evidence that you provide. They will probably make a decision on the review at their January meeting. Then we will get the results of that and if they say "Yeah, we made a mistake," then we're in seventh heaven.

**etc.** How likely is that to happen?

**RA** Not very. For us (the review process) is more of a formality than anything else. After that we will get into the appeals process. The appeals process can take quite some time. That's to our advantage. Everything in this review process is to our advantage as well, because while we are in these review processes we maintain our accreditation. We're kind of in uncharted territory here—there's not a lot of history about institutions that have gone through something like this. We're kind of like groundbreakers in a lot of ways. My hope is that as we get through the appeals process, that sometime late in spring the ACCJC will take a real hard look at everything that's been submitted to them and they will render some sort of decision as to whether or not they're going to stay by the July 31, 2014, date or not. My understanding is that it is a possibility to extend that date. We're looking for every bit of time that we can possibly get.

**etc.** Do you think City College is overinvested in faculty? If the school is to meet the ACCJC requirements how many staff do you think will need to be laid off?

**RA** It's not our intent to lay off any full-time faculty. Because of lack of enrollment we have had to not rehire some adjunct faculty. But we have not laid off any full-time faculty and I don't think that is what the ACCJC is looking for. We have a higher number of full-time faculty at the institution than what is required by the state. But I don't think that is something that is going to determine whether or not the ACCJC is going to allow us to remain accredited or not.

**etc.** Are you willing or able to say if City is going to close any of its campuses?

**RA** I think we are going to do some shifting of some activities but I don't think we will be closing any of the centers. There have been a lot of rumors flying around out there. One of the things I have found here is that this place is just a major rumor mill. One person can whisper something in the corner of one room and two hours later it is like gospel across the entire institution.

**etc.** What do you think of the way that City College has been portrayed by the local media?

**RA** There's a lot of misinformation. The headline is "City College to Close" but when you read the article, the article doesn't match that headline. Because that's what catches the reader. There are a lot of folks who just read the headline and never read the story. And it just gripes me, when I see things like that. We're suffering from that and it's a fact that it's a lot easier to get negative information out there than it is to get positive information. That's just the way society in general works.

**etc.** What do you think of the way that City College has been portrayed by the ACCJC?

**RA** I think it is an accurate portrayal. I say that in the sense that no one has said that the problems that have been revealed within the accreditation process are not true. All the problems that have been revealed are problems that the college has. It has the financial problems, and the governance problems, etcetera.

**etc.** What about people who disagree with the ACCJC's action against City College? Any thoughts about them?

**RA** I would have to say that I would refer those people to the rules and bylaws of the ACCJC. The other 113 institutions have abided by those rules and bylaws. We have to meet those standards. And we can't tell them that they are wrong for setting those standards. My job is to meet those standards, not to fight with the ACCJC. You can't change the rules in the middle of the game. They make the rules. My job is to make sure we meet those rules.

**etc.** What are your thoughts on the various lawsuits filed against the ACCJC?

**RA** I wish they had not chosen the path they have chosen in terms of lawsuits, etcetera. I am not joined in those lawsuits in any way. Obviously I don't support them, that's not my job. Those lawsuits are totally outside the realm of anything I do. What's going to happen with those is going to happen as they wind through the court system. And the legal system generally takes quite some time. In the meantime, to maintain our accreditation, we are going to have to meet the ACCJC's standards.

**etc.** How do you feel about the student marches and protests that have brought so much media attention to City College's dilemma? Do you think this has helped or hurt the reputation of the institution?

**RA** I don't know that they have hurt the reputation of the institution but I think they focus more on the negative than they do the positive and that's not what we need. I think morale is down across the institution and activities like that intensify low morale. They're not positive or constructive from my perspective.

**etc.** When is your contract as special trustee up?

**RA** It's up in July 2014. By state law, a special trustee can only be appointed one year at a time. I've now been appointed twice.

**etc.** Is there an option for you to be appointed again next year?

**RA** If you are asking me if I plan on staying for another year my answer to that is no. You've got a new chancellor here and I think that you will probably have another special trustee. I think by that time I will have accomplished what I hope to accomplish—which is to keep this place open. All right, my lunch is sitting right on my desk there waiting for me. It's called an apple. ■



▲ Robert Agrella was appointed special trustee by the state chancellor last July, he holds unilateral decision making power at the school.

# TURMOIL IN EGYPT

Photo Essay by Khaled Sayed



In the spring of 2011, when I saw the television images of the revolution spilling into the streets of Cairo, my hometown, I grabbed my camera and flew back home as soon as the borders were reopened. I always dreamed of making a documentary about the reality of Egyptian politics.

As a filmmaker living and working in San Francisco, and an Egyptian native, I was in a perfect position to do so.

I call my style “radically independent filmmaking.” In Egypt, I relied on a small group of volunteers to locate interviewees, whom I filmed in open public spaces with very little equipment. Usually with just a DSLR camera and a microphone.

I grew up in Cairo and lived there before moving to the United States after graduating from law school there a decade ago. Before I immigrated here, Egypt had been under emergency law as far back as I can remember. Hosni Mubarak was the only president I knew.

The photographs featured in this essay were taken earlier this year between June 30 and July 3, during protests in Cairo.

I’d been in Egypt for six months making my third documentary, which focuses on

women’s rights after the revolution. It was my fourth visit since the fall of Mubarak.

Women were among the leaders of the the 2011 Arab Spring protests. Through their efforts, dictatorial regimes were toppled and political systems were changed. But, as a result of this upheaval, many women found that the countries they fought to revolutionize were returning to old cultural traditions that limited their freedom. The right to divorce. Marriage age. Adultery laws. Rape. Domestic violence. Education. Freedom of movement. All issues that women in the Arab world continue to pursue.

My first documentary, “Egypt: The Story Behind the Revolution,” was about the overthrow of Mubarak in 2011. The second, “Stories from Tahrir,” was about life after the revolution.

Standing this spring in Tahrir Square,

where the revolution began, things seemed much the same. Although there was less security, and more trash on the street, nothing else had really changed. The economy continued to sink, while crime, corruption, and poverty continued to flourish.

But Egypt was under a new regime. The Muslim Brotherhood had taken over after Mubarak’s political party was banned from participating in elections. Ironical, because the Brotherhood itself had been outlawed in Egypt for half a century. The Brotherhood’s candidate, Mohamed Morsi, was an unknown who rose to become the post-revolution president of Egypt.

Before Mubarak left, people didn’t have the freedom to discuss politics openly, but under Morsi people felt free to complain about the new regime, the gas shortages and rising inflation.

It became clear that Egypt had been split



▲ A family resting after a long walk to protest at the Al-Itihidaya presidential palace in Cairo.

between Muslim Brotherhood supporters and everyone else. It wasn't the civil war that the news media made it out to be, but there was definitely a change in the air.

During the year of Muslim Brotherhood rule, Egypt suffered electric, gas and water shortages, along with rapid inflation. The people were worse off than they had been during the 30 years of the Mubarak dictatorship.

I documented the four days of protests that took place across Egypt beginning on June 30, with images that show the anger and determination of the people, who took to the streets to hold the Morsi administration accountable for its failures.

It was the largest organized protest in human history, with more than 30 million people participating across the country according to Google, which based its estimate on an analysis of satellite imaging.

During the June 30 rally, I walked from the Metro to the El Etahdya presidential palace. Along the way, I heard the crowd chanting "Ash-shab yurid isqat an-nizam"—the people want to topple the regime. It reminded me of what people told me happened on Jan. 25, 2011, during the initial revolution, when people were chanting the same slogan to overthrow Mubarak.

As a result of the protests this summer, the army removed Mohamed Morsi from office. Political analysts and foreign governments are still debating whether this represents a rekindling of the revolution or a military coup.

Polls show a majority of Egyptians are grateful the military stepped in.

♦ ♦

It was the military who convinced Mubarak to step down on Feb. 11, 2011, after 18 days of crippling protests. The military also answered the call to remove Morsi this past summer.

Many people discouraged criticism of the military during the June 30 rallies, on the basis that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend."

Attempts to speak out against the military were shouted down with the slogan: "The people and the army—one hand." These confrontations often became violent.

Over the past two years, the military has been able to convince the public that its heroic intervention was the key to toppling the regimes—not the millions of citizens who occupied the streets and squares.

Despite the army's popularity, many of the activists don't trust them. And they're not convinced that they are working for the people's benefit.

Mubarak had been a military man before he took office, as had presidents Anwar Sadat and Gamal Abdel Nasser before him. Military rule is something with which Egypt is all too familiar.

During the protests that took down Mubarak, the military was initially a violent, repressive force. Since January 25, 2011, more than 1,200 civilians have been tried before military courts.

After winning the presidential election in June 2012, Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood drafted a new constitution that expanded presidential power. Inspired more by religious fundamentalism than secular concerns, the Brotherhood tried to become the sole political power in Egypt. They suppressed opposition with smear campaigns and intimidation.

The constitution also guaranteed that no one would be allowed to review the military's financial affairs, their factories, or their assets. The military controls more than 60 percent of the economy and remains the strongest player in Egyptian politics.

They succeeded in controlling what happened this year, just as they had in 2011. For them, it wasn't about freedom and democracy for the people. It was about protecting their own interests.

When popular opposition to Morsi grew, the military focused on gaining popular support. They used a variety of tactics—overseeing and even orchestrating the rallies and celebrations, and dropping flags from their helicopters to the crowd below, indicating their support for the protesters' cause.

The state police were using similar strategies to gain popularity. It seems people have already forgotten they are notorious for detaining innocent people, torturing them, even killing them.

A classic example is Khaled Said, a young university graduate beaten to death on his doorstep by police in 2010. Although his death was officially ruled a drug overdose, pictures of his bludgeoned face circulated on the internet and pointed to police brutality.



▲ A military guard in combat gear at the north gate of the Al-Itihidaya presidential palace in Cairo.



▲ Protesters on top of a telephone pole carrying Egyptian flags outside the Al-Itihidaya presidential palace in Cairo.

His death was one of the things that triggered Egypt's revolution. Now the police, like the military, are praised as heroes. They're not held accountable for their crimes against peaceful protestors and are trying to re-brand themselves as protectors of the revolution.

The awful truth is that both the military and the police served Morsi when it was convenient, but ultimately sacrificed the Brotherhood when it failed to govern the country. They'll serve a future regime, regardless of the will of the people.

♦ ♦

Egypt is currently ruled by an interim government led by Adli Mansour. The military has promised that a presidential election will be held in early 2014.

In November, Mansour signed a new law stating that future protests or demonstrations require government approval. The law has angered activists, who have taken to the streets to oppose it. Scores have been arrested and some have been killed.

Egyptians are beginning to realize that without a true democratic process, the ballot box is just a way for an elite few to control the masses. The responsibility of the people of any free democratic country is to keep vigilant, and to use the power of organized, peaceful protest to remove anyone who doesn't serve the interests of the people. ■



▲ Graffiti on the Al-Itihidaya presidential palace in Cairo.  
**From right to left:** Ex-President Hosni Mubarak, Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, President Morsi, and then the unknown.  
**The words above:** "Mubarak, Military, Muslim Brotherhood."



▲ A large Egyptian flag carried by protesters on the streets outside the presidential palace in Cairo.



▲ The crowd in front of the presidential palace at the main stage waving Egyptian flags, celebrating the ousting of Morsi.



Donna K. De la Cruz

# WHO WILL SPEAK FOR CITY?

## Political heavyweights mum on CCSF crisis

By Daniel Raile / Illustrations by Brian Lei

ON THE COVER

When California's largest college has to fight for its very existence, it's a safe bet that politics are involved. But in the case of City College of San Francisco's accreditation struggles, the city's most powerful politicians have kept quiet.

In January 2012, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) issued its stiffest sanction against the school, forcing City College to make dramatic changes or lose its accreditation.

If the school is stripped of accreditation, it will lose state and federal funding, forcing it to close or be absorbed by another community college district. The commission has indicated it will pull City's accreditation on July 31, 2014.

The decisions of the ACCJC were made behind closed doors but will shape the future of public higher education in San Francisco. The situation has caused outrage and confusion in the community, but the city's most powerful politicians have given the issue the silent treatment.

Governor Jerry Brown, Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom, Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), Representative Nancy Pelosi (D-San Francisco) and Mayor Ed Lee—the biggest names in local politics and major players in the Democratic Party—have been largely silent on the issue of the school's impending closure.

"We know not everything has been perfect (at City College) and that there are significant issues to tackle," says State Assemblyman Tom Ammiano (D-San Francisco), "but we should be willing to confront the accreditation commission and not just capitulate to its attack on a school that is performing well."

Though leadership from the top has been absent, others have taken action to preserve the school and the opportunities it affords the community.

U.S. Congresswomen Jackie Speier, (D-14th District) and Anna Eshoo (D-18th District), State Senator Jim Beall (D-San Jose), and Assemblyman Ammiano held a public forum at Ocean campus on November 7 to address concerns about the ACCJC and its handling of City College's accreditation review.

When an ESL student from the audience expressed his fear that the school might close, Speier reassured him. "Not going to happen!" she said.

Speier, whose district includes City College's main campus, pledged to draft legislation that would check the power of the ACCJC and make it more accountable.

Congresswoman Speier's public forum hasn't been the only pushback felt by the ACCJC. A number of actions taken by politicians and the courts are also in the works.

*"I'm sure the secretary of education would listen to what Nancy Pelosi had to say."*

—Timothy Killikelly

State senators Beall and Jim Nielsen (R-Yuba City), have called for a state audit of the commission.

San Francisco City Attorney Dennis J. Herrera has filed an unprecedented lawsuit against the ACCJC on behalf of the people of San Francisco and California, citing unfair and unlawful practices.

The federal Department of Education has cited the ACCJC for violating its own operating standards.

The local chapter of the American Federation of Teachers faculty union and the Save CCSF Coalition of students, faculty and staff have also filed lawsuits against the commission.

House minority leader Pelosi was in town the day before the Ocean campus forum doing a press junket with Mayor Ed Lee. But she didn't attend. Neither did Lee.

None of the political heavyweights commented on the efforts of their colleagues to address the crisis.

This has been the norm since the sanction was issued nearly two years ago.

It's uncharacteristic for Pelosi, whose district covers most of San Francisco. She is the highest-ranking female politician in American history and has been a staunch supporter of City College in the past.

There's not been a word of support from Senator Dianne Feinstein either. For someone who began her political career on the city's Board of Supervisors and was a three-term mayor before being elected to the U.S. Senate, you might expect more.

Lt. Governor Gavin Newsom, born and reared in San Francisco and mayor from 2004 to 2010 before heading to Sacramento, has been conspicuously silent, too.

And although Mayor Ed Lee initially pledged to help City meet ACCJC standards, he has since avoided public comment.

And where, oh where, has San Francisco native Governor Jerry Brown been on the issue?

"If (the ACCJC) is going to close the school down, then they (our elected representatives) definitely have a responsibility," said Timothy Killikelly, a political science instructor at City. "I'm sure the secretary of education would listen to what a Nancy Pelosi had to say."

Killikelly says it is not surprising that these politicians would hesitate to get involved, at first.

"When people think about accreditation," Killikelly said, "they usually think it is a pretty straight-forward case that schools ought to meet the standards—which are generally that students are learning and that there is no cronyism, corruption, fraud—ethical lapses. But fair-minded people who look into the details of the City College case will find that something is amiss."

After a 15 percent drop in enrollment, City College of San Francisco is still the largest school in California's community college system, with 85,000 students. Neither the

quality of instruction nor the school's programs were cited by the ACCJC.

San Francisco voters have expressed their support repeatedly, by voting to increase funding for the school through local bond measures.

San Francisco Fire Chief Joanne Hayes-White, who went to school here, notes her department relies on the school's EMT and Fire Sciences programs. The San Francisco native has taken math, physical education and real estate classes here, as well as EMT and fire science courses.

"City College is a phenomenal piece of San Francisco's infrastructure," Chief Hayes-White says, "the health of the city requires educational options. If City College went away it would be a huge loss for the whole city, not just students."

The weeks and months ahead will provide some insight into the future as the ACCJC prepares to address the college's appeal, and as the independent audit of the commission and the lawsuits move forward.

Perhaps all of this silence is a matter of political timing.

"Maybe they're waiting for the right moment to present itself as things play out," Killikelly says.

That moment is rapidly approaching.

It could be the case that these powerful figures have kept quiet because they support the ACCJC's actions but are wary of saying so and alienating those who support the school.

It could be for fear of risking political capital in the midst of a complex problem and an uncertain outcome.

Maybe City College's struggles are simply not high enough on their agenda.

Silence is not the same as neutrality. It lends itself to speculation, interpretation and suspicion. It implies complicity and suggests concealment. It doesn't inspire trust.



Mayor Ed Lee presides over a city that is experiencing remarkable economic times. He is quick to mention his administration's role in San Francisco's recent growth. But he stops short of discussing how public higher education fits into that picture.

"I would like to see the mayor be stronger in his support for the college," Ammiano told *Etc. Magazine*.

Several demonstrations at City Hall have called on Lee to step forward and speak up—his unwillingness to do so has



increased the frustration of students, faculty, staff and the public.

Soon after the sanction was announced in the winter of 2011, Lee said City College was too important to fail and vowed to work with the school's leadership to make sure it retained accreditation.

But as the process has unfolded and encountered backlash, he has said little to nothing.

Hydra Mendoza, the mayor's education adviser, concedes that the mayor could improve his messaging.

"We could be better about sharing what we are doing," she said. "But that is the mayor's style. He's about getting CCSF the resources to build their platform, keeping his head down."

After hundreds of school supporters staged a City Hall demonstration in July and called on Lee to stand up against the Accrediting Commission, he told reporters, "I'm not so sure that's the best use of time."

Mendoza says the mayor prefers doing things quietly, avoiding controversy and methodically checking items off a list.

She cites several ways the mayor has helped the school retain its accreditation.

"The guiding principle has been utilizing the city's resources to strengthen the foundations where they seem weak, to ensure the longevity of City College."

Mendoza says Lee has had members of his staff—from the city's budget, public finance, human resources and communications departments—help support the school's undersized administration to address problems identified by the ACCJC.

In addition, she says the mayor has

raised \$2 million in private investment for the school to meet needs highlighted by Special Trustee Robert Agrella.

Mendoza, who has served as point person for Lee's dealings with the City College crisis, said their focus has been on the "point-by-point roadmap" for complying with the ACCJC's recommendations.

"I look at the road map and see all the progress that has been made, and I see our fingerprints all over that," Mendoza said.

Although Lee doesn't have his predecessor Gavin Newsom's flair for public speaking, he does pound the pavement and manages to get his message out in other ways. He maintains a constant social media presence. And he frequently flies out of town to advise leaders of other cities about how to replicate San Francisco's successes.

His Twitter feed consists of photo-ops with business and community leaders, peppered with shout-outs to innovative technology companies and support for development projects and city programs.

While Congresswoman Speier led the forum at City College, he posed with police officers in front of a MUNI bus to announce a public safety transit campaign. Another post that day thanked Twitter for "starting, staying & growing in San Francisco, revitalizing Central Market & helping housing, parks, streets & education."

His Twitter feed bears no mention of his efforts to help City College.

Last year, according to the *Economist Magazine*, the Bay Area's economy grew faster than any comparable area in the United States, and "every employment sector outpaced the national average."

In his San Francisco Chronicle column on November 24, former Mayor Willie Brown predicted that the disconnect between those who benefit from the rapid growth and those who suffer from the resulting price spikes will cause a political backlash. He wrote that residents "are going to start asking why we're giving away the city to all these white-male-dominated businesses that don't even hire locals."

Mayor Lee risks being lumped in with what the *Economist* called the "hollowing-out of San Francisco."

In November, he worked with members of the Board of Supervisors to combat the wave of evictions under the Ellis Act that have drawn the ire of city residents.

Speaking up for City College as resistance to the ACCJC sanction mounts is another

opportunity for the mayor to reaffirm his commitment to the city's working class.



Three-time Gov. Jerry Brown is no stranger to the politics of higher education in California.

His father, Gov. Pat Brown, introduced the "Master Plan" that expanded the three-tier system to ensure access to higher education for all Californians.

The current governor's first elected position was on the Los Angeles Community College Board of Trustees.

During his first stint as governor, 1975-1983, he opposed Proposition 13, the voter initiative that, among other things, put Sacramento in charge of allocating resources to the community colleges.

Proposition 13 passed despite his opposition and requires a two-thirds majority to pass a tax increase in the California legislature. The only other way for the state to raise any new tax is by passing a statewide ballot measure.

The difficulty of raising revenue has contributed to budget shortfalls and an increase in tuition costs throughout the state's higher education system.

"The California system has a dysfunctional funding model, with low tuitions and falling state funding. It is one of the most under-funded higher education programs in the U.S. today," says John Aubrey Douglass, a research fellow in higher education policy at UC Berkeley. "Within the current framework of an implosion of the funding model statewide, community colleges can't provide the services they are intended to."

Governor Brown addressed this problem when he authored Proposition 30, which

raises funding for education by increasing state sales tax and income taxes on those earning over \$250,000 a year. The initiative was passed by a majority of California voters last year and is expected to bring \$6 billion annually in education funding directly to public schools and community colleges.

In 2010, the governor (formerly known as "Moonbeam") was elected on a promise to cut spending in order to balance the budget. He vowed not to seek re-election, which he says enables him to make tough, belt-tightening decisions. In 2013 he succeeded in balancing the state budget.

He has demonstrated his hard-nosed approach in efforts to resolve the challenges facing the state's higher education system.

His latest state budget introduced a new policy tying eligibility for Cal Grants to the stricter standards currently used for federally-issued Pell Grants. The shift cuts spending by reducing accessibility to a program that helps thousands of students.

This fall, Governor Brown supported legislation to introduce a new funding model for community colleges. Beginning as a pilot program at selected community colleges next summer, participating schools will offer accelerated winter and summer courses for a higher fee (roughly \$200 per credit compared to the statewide community college rate of \$46 a unit). Brown signed the measure despite opposition by California Community College Chancellor Brice Harris and teacher unions.

But faced with immediate threats, City College may not survive long enough to benefit from Governor Brown's long-term policy fixes.

The governor has not commented on legislation being pursued by Senators Beall and Nielsen, which would address the ACCJC's procedures and its lack of accountability.

Budgetary shortfalls at the school are mostly the result of statewide cuts. These have been compounded by a severe drop in enrollment that is a direct result of the accreditation crisis.

The number of students attending City College has fallen by nearly 15 percent since the summer of 2012. Since it receives state and federal funds on a per-student basis, this significantly impacts the school's operating budget while it tries to make the reforms required by the ACCJC.

Douglass, the UC Berkeley professor, believes the governor could do more for City College, including earmarking additional



Jerry Brown

interim funding through the chancellor's office.

Though Governor Brown has not offered direct help for City College, he has intervened in other disputes that threatened public interest. In July, for instance, he brokered a 60-day "cool off" period to avoid a crippling BART transit strike.

Yet he has not weighed in on the negotiations between City College and the accreditation commission, the outcome of which affects not only the school's 85,000 students, but the opportunities of millions of prospective students for years to come.

In the past, the governor has pursued public-private partnerships to address some of the challenges of public higher education.

In 2011, he secured a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to help streamline degree requirements and credit transfers between community colleges and state universities.

This year, his budget set aside nearly \$17 million for the community college system to expand its online education offerings.

The governor supported a pilot program at San Jose State University that offered lower-level math and English courses online through Udacity, one of the bigger online education outfits in Silicon Valley.

Udacity CEO Sebastian Thrun said that Brown called and emailed him directly to pitch the partnership.

Former San Francisco Mayor and Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom has heralded the SJSU program as an important innovation for the future of public education in California.

Although he has said little about the ACCJC sanction of City College, Newsom has been unequivocal about the problems facing community colleges in California as a whole.



Gavin Newsom



"The California system of education is not sustainable...this is code red, we have to do something dramatic," he said during a recent tech-industry forum, where he shared the stage with Thrun.

Newsom also alluded to governance problems in California colleges, and implied that so-called "disruptive innovation" could be instrumental in resolving them.

"Technology has radically leveled a lot of top-down, hierarchical institutions," he said.

The idea that online education can resolve structural problems in higher education is widely debated.

"We keep hearing about 'disruptive innovation', but I see a lot more disruption than innovation," said Madeline Mueller, chair of City College's music department and founding member of the Department Chair Council.

Science writer and University of Manitoba Professor Vaclav Smil disparages the spread of a mindset that relies on technological innovation to solve big social problems.

"It's like 'Let's not reform the education system, the tax system... just wait for this innovation manna from a little group of people in Silicon Valley,'" he said in an interview featured in the December issue of *Wired Magazine*.

It appears that Brown and Newsom have a vision for public higher education that shifts some of the responsibilities of leadership to the private sector. Even if these experiments prove successful, they won't do so in time to help City College. The school's future is being decided right now without the governor or lieutenant governor's input.

Their support could be instrumental in saving the school and securing its long-term success, but time is running out.



San Francisco claims two of the country's most powerful Democrats among its elected officials—U.S. Congresswoman and former Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, and Sen. Dianne Feinstein. Both have deep roots in the city and are firmly entrenched in the power structure of the party.

They have been key players in many of the nation's biggest political battles, from the Affordable Care Act and NSA wiretapping to the government shutdown.

But neither has had anything to say about the fight over public education in their hometown.

Pelosi delivered City College's commencement address in 2011, during which she invoked the government's responsibility for providing quality, accessible higher education.

"We must remove obstacles in the way of those of you who want to continue to learn," she told graduates at City College's Ram Stadium.

Both Pelosi and Feinstein supported and voted for legislation passed in 2010 which ended government subsidies for student loans.

The direct student loan program has been the Obama Administration's most visible and widest-reaching achievement in higher education.

The policy uses degree attainment as the primary measurement of a school's success. This has problematic implications for an institution like City College, which has traditionally prioritized life-long learning and skill development.

For example, English as a Second Language is by far the school's largest program and provides crucial assistance and opportunities for San Franciscans. But it does not lead directly to a degree.

The majority of the city's elected office-holders are Democrats, which might make them reluctant to break with the federal education policy their party has implemented. In recent months, however, there have been a growing number of examples of politicians doing just that.

In addition to the efforts by Congresswomen Speier and Eshoo, the San Francisco County Democratic Central Committee passed a resolution in September that

supported City College and criticized the ACCJC's actions. The resolution passed unopposed and was sponsored by five members of the city's Board of Supervisors.

The participation of Nancy Pelosi or Dianne Feinstein could tip the scales in City College's favor, and encourage more of their colleagues to follow suit.

The issues at stake go beyond education policy. Shutting the school down, shrinking it, or making it more expensive would squeeze the city's poor and working class. Any politician who succeeds in making this case could find a sympathetic ear in the executive branch of the federal government.

"I believe this is the defining challenge of our time: Making sure our economy works for every working American," said President Barack Obama in a public address on December 4. The president went on to emphasize the role of education in meeting this challenge.

"We've got to lower costs so that young people are not burdened by enormous debt when they make the right decision to get higher education," he said. "We should offer our people the best technical education in the world. That's why we've worked to connect local businesses with community colleges, so that workers young and old can learn the new skills that earn them more money."

City College has deep ties with local businesses and offers programs that deliver quality training at a fraction of the cost elsewhere. Although its mission dovetails with Democratic Party ideals, it suffers from a lack of support by the party's powerful office holders.

This winter the school will learn whether its efforts to comply with the ACCJC have been successful. If the news is bad, perhaps more of the Democratic Party's power elite will step forward.

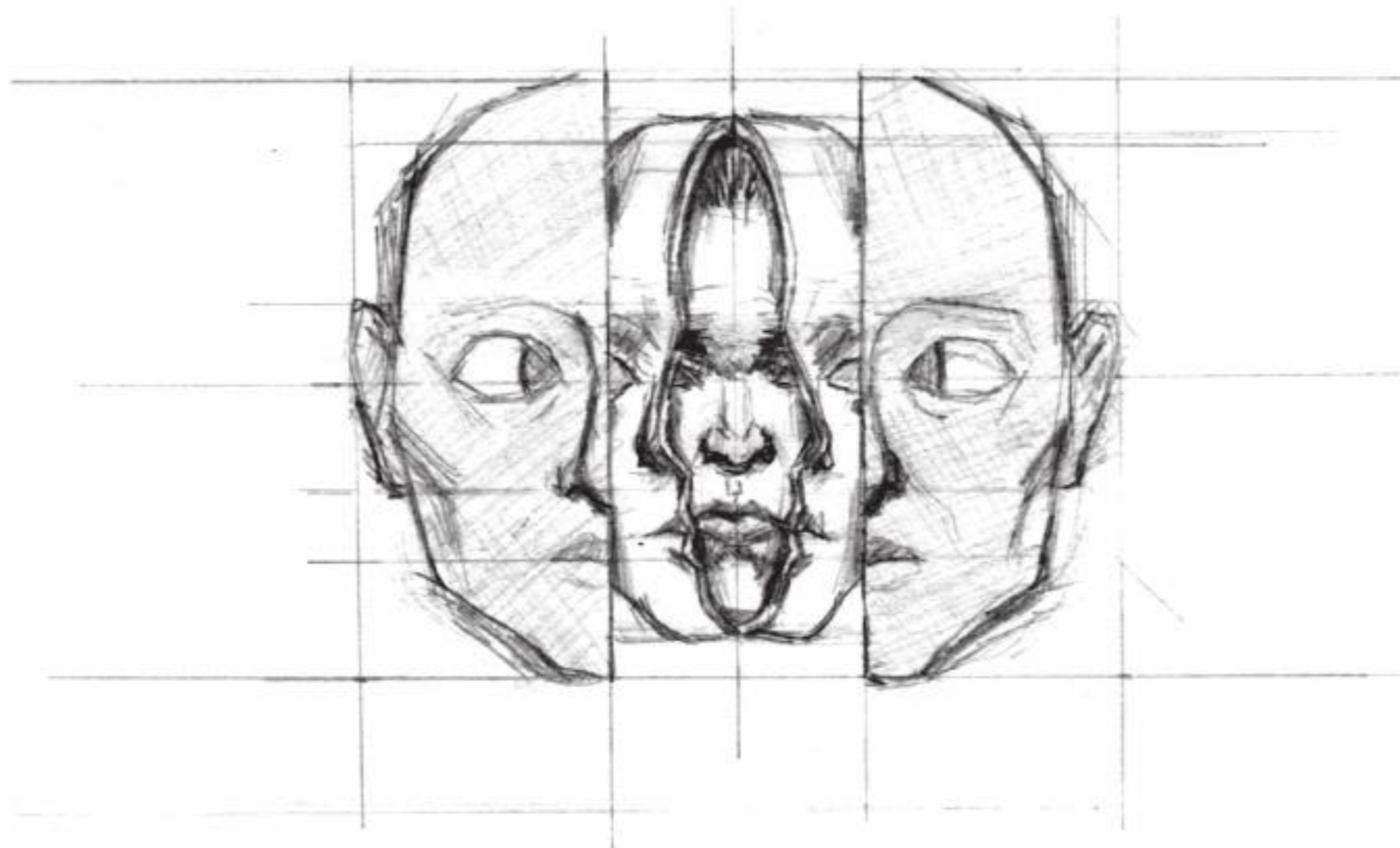
The school needs a champion and its fate needs to be part of a public dialogue between leaders and those they represent.

"People love City College," says Madeline Mueller. "Everybody (in San Francisco) knows someone who has gone here. This is your constituency, and if you let it close you'll become unelectable." ■

# WHO IS THE ACCJC?

*The faceless accreditation commission behind City's troubles*

By Kelcie Walther / Illustration by Brian Lei / Photos by Khaled Sayed



The headquarters of the organization that is deciding City College's future is located in an out-of-the-way office park. Surrounded by strip malls in Novato, 30 miles north of San Francisco, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges occupies a small set of back rooms in a two-story building shared with doctor's offices and insurance companies.

There is no reception area at this powerful agency, which reviews and judges the fate of the state's 127 community colleges. A single desk covered with piles of unorganized papers is visible through the windows on either side of a wooden door that extends from floor to ceiling.

An unidentified middle-aged man in a blue polo shirt and jeans opens the door and says: "How can I help you?"

Initially, he seems cooperative, but his smile quickly fades when he learns that a reporter from City College of San Francisco's Etc. Magazine is inquiring about an interview.

"Oh, you're from City College? No media relations here," he says, as he quickly closes the imposing door.

In the year and a half since the ACCJC placed City College of San Francisco under sanction, crucial decisions about the school's future have been made behind these closed doors in this bedroom community.

The commission's meetings are not open

to the public and minutes are not available either. It's an unusual way to run an agency that oversees such a large swath of public higher education.

Despite the low profile that the agency maintains, the commission's decisions have received a lot of scrutiny lately.

The ACCJC faces three lawsuits, a federal investigation, and criticism from students, faculty and administrators as well as the local community. City, state and national politicians are also getting involved.

Critics of the ACCJC say they are an agency gone wild.

"I'm deeply concerned about the potential intimidation and overzealousness at the ACCJC," Congresswoman Jackie Speier (D-14th District / San Mateo) told those attending a public forum held at City College's Ocean Campus in November.

"In the past six years, over 60 percent of California's community colleges have received sanctions," Congresswoman Anna

Eshoo (D-18th District / San Jose) pointed out. "This is a cause of deep concern for me. The national average is no more than 6 percent."

City College of San Francisco is among the 60 percent. Slapped with the most serious sanction, "show cause," the college faces closure on July 31, 2014.

♦ ♦

The ACCJC is the only organization authorized to accredit community colleges in the state.

Every six years, these schools go through an accreditation review cycle. The process consists of a self-study report followed with a site visit by handpicked teams of teachers and administrators.

After their reviews have been completed, the ACCJC's 19-member volunteer board discusses whether to recommend renewal of a school's accreditation for the next six years.

If accreditation is not renewed, a sanction



▲ At a demonstration at City Hall in August students and community members voiced their concerns about the ACCJC.

is issued. Under sanction, the school's accreditation is placed on probation.

In 2006, City College cleared its accreditation review. But six years later, it was blindsided with the "show cause" death sentence.

After further review, the ACCJC announced that City College had not adequately addressed the issues raised in the sanction and would lose accreditation next July.

Many think that the "show cause" sanction was too harsh.

"The punishment does not fit the crime," said Chancellor Ron Galatolo of the San Mateo County Community College District. He described the sanction as "a severe and over-zealous action taken by the ACCJC."

Publicity surrounding the issue has dramatically affected City College's enrollment, which has seen a 23 percent decline compared to this time last year.

As students flee, state funds evaporate.

"The college lost \$14.3 million since 2011, nearly 9 percent of funding," the San Francisco Chronicle reported recently.

After the ACCJC adopted new accreditation standards 10 years ago, California has seen a spike in sanctions.

"Since those new accreditation standards, no one knows how to pass muster with the ACCJC," said Richard Hansen, the president of California Community College Independents, a coalition of faculty associations from independent community college districts throughout the state.

During the past two years, ACCJC President Barbara Beno has become a lightning rod for criticism because most of the changes in regional accreditation standards occurred after she was hired in 2001.

In August, State Senator Jim Nielson (R-4th District / Yuba City) told a legislative hearing about his concerns.

"In all my career, in my thousands of meetings with agency individuals—representatives, secretaries, etcetera—I have never dealt with a more arrogant, condescending and dismissive individual," he said of Beno. "That does not give us comfort that all is well in how they (the ACCJC) are treating our California Community Colleges. That attitude being reflected by such a senior person raised huge red flags for me."

State Assemblyman Tom Ammiano (D-17th District / San Francisco) also addressed the crowd at the November 7 public forum.

"There's a pseudo-morality that I've heard being expressed by the accreditation committee. Lots of duplicity, lots of double standards, lots of trivialization of your lives and what you put into it, lots of demonization of the teachers and instructors regardless of the surveys that show how affective our teachers are here," he said.

State Senator Jim Beall (D-15th District / San Jose) has charged that ACCJC began destroying records, shredding documents and deleting emails after learning of the impending legislative audit.

"We need a fair and transparent system to accredit our schools," he said at the Ocean Campus forum last month.

The ACCJC is not, in fact, a government entity, but rather an independent body made up primarily of educators from the region. It was set up this way, its website notes, to avoid political influence on the accreditation process.

Registered in California as a non-profit organization, the ACCJC is not held to the same transparency standards as government agencies.

"The ACCJC doesn't have accountability standards, rather they are unrestrained and defined by themselves," notes Sen. Nielson.

His colleague, Sen. Beall, is confident that their audit will address the public's concerns.

"Despite the destruction of records that took place, we will conduct an audit and I guarantee our auditors will look in every crevice and cranny of the accreditation commission to get all the information we need to have an audit completed," he told last month's forum participants.

Legal pressure has been mounting against the ACCJC as well.

San Francisco City Attorney Dennis Herrera filed a lawsuit in August alleging that "the private agency unlawfully allowed its advocacy and political bias to prejudice its evaluation of college accreditation standards."

San Francisco's Deputy City Attorney Sara Eisenberg, who is the lead attorney on the case, looks forward to obtaining the commission's files, documents and communications.

"The ACCJC has closed itself off, but when things have come out they have been disturbing," she told Etc. Magazine in November.

A month after the city attorney's office filed its lawsuit, the California Federation of Teachers filed one of its own in San Francisco Superior Court. The CFT suit accuses the ACCJC of "engaging in unfair and unlawful business practices in sanctioning City College."

Then, on November 7, the Save CCSF Coalition joined the fray with yet another lawsuit in the same court, asking to nullify the commission's decision because "the ACCJC itself has operated in violation of the laws and regulations that are supposed to guide its deliberations."

Save CCSF Coalition's lawsuit also alleges conflicts of interest. At a press conference on November 7, the coalition's attorney

Dan Seigel noted that president Barbara Beno's husband served on the City College evaluation team.

In addition, he pointed out another serious conflict.

"The ACCJC attempted to coerce the college into pre-funding pension liability by paying money into a fund management organization. The organization that they wanted the funds to go through is controlled by many members of the commission, including their vice chair, Dr. Steven Kinsella," Seigel said.

Concerns about the commission are being voiced on a federal level as well.

In an August 13 letter to ACCJC President Barbara Beno, the United States Department of Education cited the commission for a number of shortcomings, including conflict of interest and lack of policy consistency.

The DOE recently announced it would give the commission a year to bring itself into compliance with the department's standards.

Among the issues the commission must address is its failure to gain the support of educators and other professionals, which is a federal requirement.

The DOE has insisted that it is unable to

reverse the ACCJC's accreditation decisions.

"Our review of the agency's petition revealed many areas where the agency does not meet the regulatory requirements; however those areas do not rise to the level for the department to recommend denying recognition," noted a December 2 DOE report.

In theory, colleges volunteer to comply with the rulings of the ACCJC. However, only colleges that are accredited may participate in the federal student financial aid program or receive state or federal funding. Without approval from the ACCJC, a California community college is responsible for its own funding, a burden no public education institution can shoulder.

No one from the ACCJC responded to our repeated attempts to contact them by phone, email and in person.

In fact, the commission has said next to nothing about the current situation at City College and has turned down several invitations to make its case to the school community.

A day after the forum at the Rivera Theatre, the ACCJC posted the following notice on their website in 18-point type:

"The ACCJC believes these third-party lawsuits are without merit. They all rest on similar premises that are, in fact, weak. It

is important to note that the City College of San Francisco itself is not involved in these suits. The College has stated that it subscribes to ACCJC standards, and is working to come into compliance with standards. These lawsuits are politically motivated and do not align with the real efforts to assure CCSF's future accreditation, but rather distract from those efforts."

On November 25th, the commission made its position clear in a follow up post on its website:

"ACCJC will resist any efforts by any third party, including the City Attorney of San Francisco, to interfere with its internal processes, including those processes that relate to the CCSF decision."

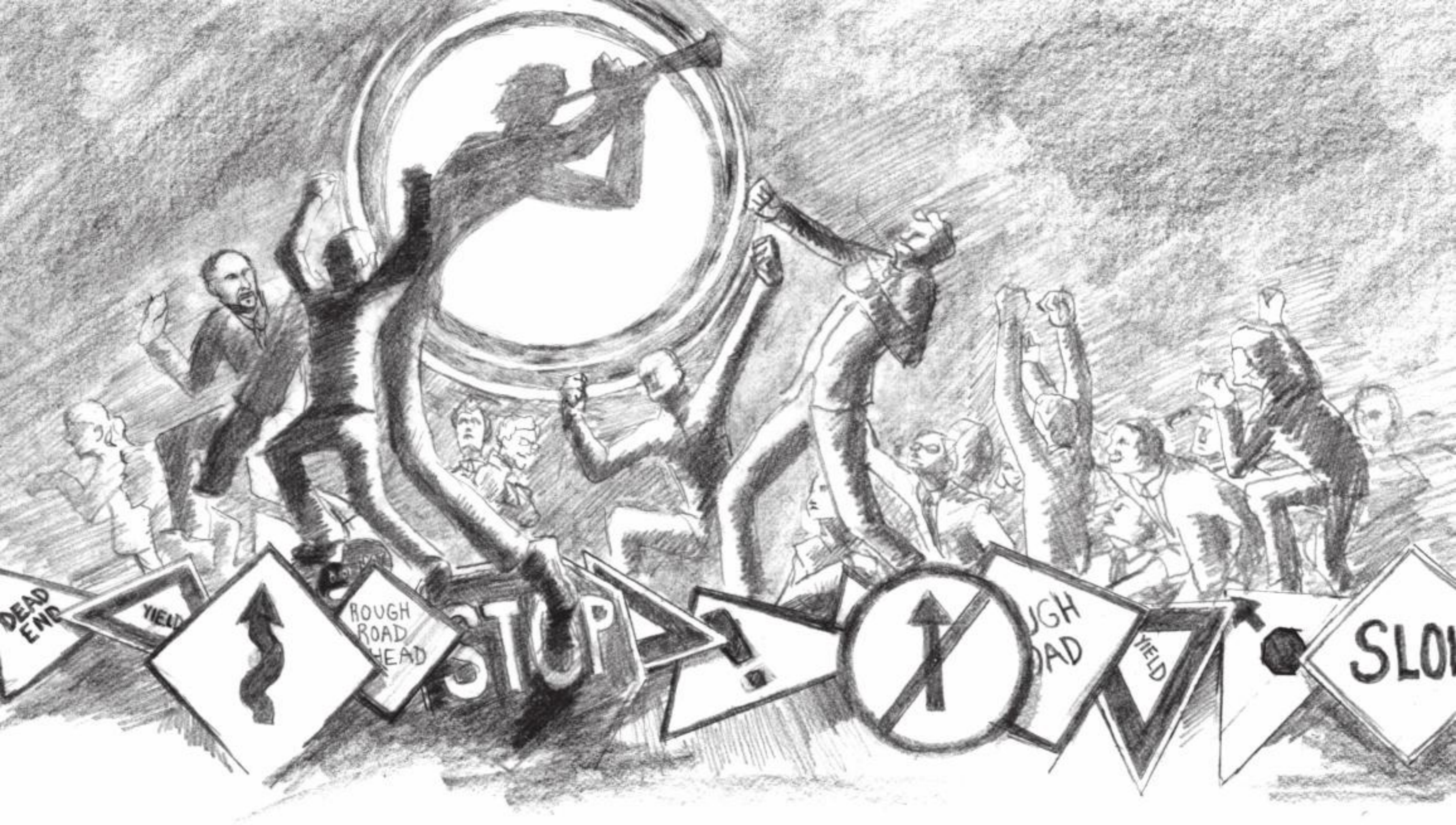
During the November 7 public forum, Congresswoman Speier said, "Dr. Beno declined our request to participate. Her lack of responsiveness is emblematic of the problem."

At the end of her opening statement during the same forum, Speier struck an optimistic note.

"(We) hope (to) stop this bad dream—or should I say nightmare—of City College of San Francisco closing," she said. ■



▲ Demonstrators sharing their criticisms of the ACCJC on the front steps of City Hall.



## OPINION

# FOLLOWING THE LUMINA-ALEC TWO-STEP

*How the accrediting commission dances to the tune of a 501(c)3*

By Greg Zeman / Illustrations By Brian Lei

The nation's community college system is being scrutinized by powerful special interests and City College of San Francisco appears to be their latest test case.

The top-down “reforms” currently being implemented by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges are tied to a complex network of like-minded foundations and think tanks. Two well-financed lobbying organizations are involved in the coordinated campaign to radically “reform” California’s community college system and the ACCJC has been a willing partner in that effort.

The Lumina Foundation is the educational brain trust behind these “reforms,” and the American Legislative Exchange Council provides the political muscle.

“The Lumina Foundation,” sounds like something straight out of “The DaVinci Code.” It conjures up images of the illuminati—a secret society of the enlightened few.

That may not be far from the mark.

Last year, the Lumina Foundation granted \$450,000 to the ACCJC over a 30-month span with the express purpose of implementing the Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP), a set of education standards produced by the Lumina Foundation without any faculty or public input.

The Indianapolis-based organization claims it is “focused solely on improving

higher education” and much of its attention is on the nation’s community colleges.

But just who is the Lumina Foundation, and how do they presume to be the arbiters of community college education?

According to its website, Lumina’s Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Counts campaign leads the most comprehensive, non-governmental reform network for community colleges, with more than 200 colleges, 100 coaches and advisors, and 15 state policy teams.

A significant ideological shift in the foundation’s focus occurred when Jamie

Merisotis, former president and founder of the conservative advocacy group, Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP), became CEO of Lumina in 2007.

The Lumina Foundation had previously focused its attention on issues concerning education accessibility. Under Merisotis its stance on education started to bear a striking resemblance to the aggressive, reform-based policies of IHEP.

"The movement from philanthropy to state policy—more hands-on than federal," was how Merisotis characterized Lumina's new direction to shareholders when he took over leadership of the foundation.

Achieving the Dream, the national initiative spearheaded by the Lumina Foundation in 2004, has direct links to several lobbying groups in higher education, including the American Association of Community Colleges; Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas-Austin; Community College Research Center, Teachers College and Jobs for the Future.

In 2010, with heavy support from Lumina, Achieving the Dream, Inc., was established to influence the decision-making processes that govern the national community college system.

Lumina's enormous resources and effective lobbying efforts have had an impact. The foundation's Facebook page notes it is the largest private foundation in the country, with \$1 billion in assets.

Its stated mission is to increase the proportion of Americans with high-quality

college degrees, certificates and credentials to 60 percent by 2025—an extremely ambitious goal.

For those in higher education, however, Lumina's outcomes-based approach is suspect.

In the case of City College of San Francisco, it is the animating force behind the ACCJC's push to sanction the school into compliance with their educational philosophy.

But the influence peddling doesn't stop there. To understand what's happening behind the curtain, there are three dots that need to be connected.

ALEC is the third dot.

The connection between the ACCJC and Lumina bears a striking resemblance to the relationship between Lumina and ALEC.

ALEC was behind successful efforts to dismantle collective bargaining for public employee unions in Wisconsin. It performs all of the functions of a lobby group but is officially recognized as a charity.

To verify the relationship between Lumina and ALEC just follow the money.

IRS records show that Lumina provided a \$300,000 Education Grant to ALEC and was a primary sponsor of the 2011 ALEC convention in New Orleans.

Lumina's generosity has not gone unrewarded—it is the lead organization for ALEC's Education Task Force, whose stated mission is "to promote excellence in the nation's educational system by advocating education reform policies that promote...

school accountability, consistent with Jeffersonian principles of federalism and individual liberty."

ALEC is not bashful about its direct ties to the Lumina Foundation and their unified effort to "reform" community colleges.

ALEC's own words suggest a "one-two" approach:

"Lumina Foundation for Education... puts the latest higher education research and initiatives right at legislators' fingertips...and (ALEC) provides (the) Model Legislation."

In a documentary special titled "The United States of ALEC," Bill Moyers reported that internal documents provided by an ALEC insider revealed "a seemingly innocuous nonprofit was actually fronting for some of the world's most powerful corporations. ALEC had been changing laws—one state at a time."

Those documents included model education bills.

"In the ALEC archives there's a giant stack of school choice bills and they're fat bills too," according to the documentary. "And it's a little slice of school choice, and that little slice of school vouchers, and it's basically a long-term agenda of how to privatize public education."

The way ALEC works—creating corporate-friendly model bills and quietly slipping them into the hands of individuals tasked with representing the public trust—is also the inspiration for how Lumina operates.

The Degree Qualification Profile is





Lumina's version of a model bill. Even though they have no power to implement it directly, responsive agencies like the ACCJC can be influenced to do it for them. And it helps that the ACCJC operates unchallenged because of their status as the only qualified agency available to so many schools.

Lumina's literature calls the DQP "a tool that can help transform U.S. higher education" by utilizing a three-tiered framework based on "learning outcomes."

That one phrase—"learning outcomes"—is the crux of the foundation's vision for education; a model based on total standardization of higher learning.

So why is City College facing closure?

Much of it has to do with the ideology of the ACCJC, which is part of the Western Association of Schools (WASC) and Colleges—the most aggressive of all accrediting agencies in operation.

A glance at the behavior of the six regional bodies responsible for accreditation shows that the WASC is by far the most punitive.

The data for 2003-2008 shows that of the six regional agencies, only WASC terminated accreditation for any of its institutions. Compared to other agencies, which filed only a handful of sanctions, the WASC filed a whopping 112.

Recent data from 2011 and 2012 shows the same contrast between the other regional bodies—who had zero to 10 actions—and the WASC, which had nearly 50.

This aggressive approach toward enforcing accreditation standards—almost exclusively carried out by the ACCJC—shocked Congresswomen Jackie Speier and Anna Eshoo, who alerted the U.S. Department of Education about their concerns in a joint letter.

"As a practical matter, there is only one accrediting entity in California: ACCJC," they wrote. "If there are deficiencies in the operation of the ACCJC... participating colleges, and more importantly the students and public served by these colleges, (would) bear the burden of these deficiencies."

And that is what is currently happening at City College, which is facing closure because the only accrediting body available to it has an ideology directly influenced by organizations with questionable motives and no public oversight.

After all the dots are connected, the "cure" for City College of San Francisco seems to be worse than the illness. ■

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35826 551 Lec. T 6:30 – 9:20 p.m.

3.0 units

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Introduction to modern mass communication, with an emphasis on development of news media, analysis of the credibility of the media and its impact on daily life. *CSU/UC/CAN*

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35827 001 Lec. MWF 10:10 – 11:00 a.m.

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BNGL 715

Gonzales

Techniques of newspaper reporting, developing and writing a news story, training in information gathering and interviewing sources.

*PREREQ: ENGL 93 or 94 or placement in ENGL 96*

## Jour 22: Feature Writing

35828 551 Lec. R 6:30 – 9:20 p.m.

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Fundamentals in feature writing for magazines and newspapers with special emphasis on profile and interpretive news features. Practical experience in interview and in-depth research techniques. Training in how to write a freelance story for publication. *PREREQ: ENGL 93 or 94 or PLACEMENT IN ENGL 96. CSU.*

## Jour 23: Electronic Copy Editing

35829 551 Lec. W 6:30 – 9:20 p.m.

3.0 units

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Rochmis

This course is for writers, working editors, and those considering a career in editing or copyediting. Students learn to edit newspapers, magazines and web site articles for accuracy, style and organization. The writer-editor relationship, and ways to keep it healthy, is emphasized throughout the course.

*PREREQ: JOUR 21, JOUR 22, and GRPH 25 CSU*

## Jour 25: Editorial Management

35830 001 L/L MWF 12:10 – 1:00 p.m.

3.0 units

BNGL 615

Gonzales

An advanced journalism course that trains prospective print editors on all aspects of operating a publication, such as developing a publishing schedule, creating story assignments, coordinating a writing staff, designing a page, writing headlines and cutlines, sizing photographs, understanding the business side of print journalism, and working with other editors and printers. *COREQ: JOUR 24*

## Jour 26: Fundamentals of Public Relations

35831 551 Lec. W 6:30-9:20 p.m.

3.0 units

Mission Campus/Rm. 217

Graham

Prepares students to create a public relations campaign which includes writing media releases, "pitch" letters, public service announcements, managing media outlets, coordinating mailings and designing leaflets and posters, as well as setting up news conferences. Special attention given to in-house public relations duties for corporate and non-profit entities. *ADVISE: JOUR 24, PREREQ: GRPH 25*

## Jour 29: Magazine Editing & Production

31449 551 L/L M 6:30 – 8:20 p.m.

3.0 units

Mission Campus/Rm. 217

Graham

Students will study the editorial, business, graphic, and production skills required for publishing a campus magazine. Course is appropriate for students interested in creative writing, graphic and fine arts, photography, business, and journalism. *PREREQ: JOUR 21 & JOUR 22. CSU*

## Jour 31: Internship Experience

35832 001 Exp MWF 9:10-10:00 a.m.

2.0 units

BNGL 713

Gonzales

Supervised on-campus or off-campus employment in a branch of journalism or a closely allied field to which the student shows him/her self to be best adapted. *COREQ: JOUR 24*

## Jour 35: Internet Journalism

35129 551 Lec. T 6:30 - 9:20 p.m.

3.0 units

Mission Campus/Rm. 218

Rochmis

Internet Journalism focuses on three topic areas: examination of the role of the online journalist, web publishing, and using the Internet for investigative purposes. *COREQ: JOUR 21*

## Jour 36: Advanced Reporting

35833 551 Lec. M 6:30 - 9:20 p.m.

3.0 units

Mission Campus/Rm. 217

Gonzales

The course introduces advanced concepts of news gathering, interviewing and writing with an emphasis on investigative reporting. Extensive research, interviewing, meeting coverage and writing involved. Students will improve and expand their news-gathering and writing skills. *COREQ: JOUR 21*

## Jour 37: Intro to Photojournalism

34104 552 Lec. W 6:30 – 9:20 p.m.

3.0 units

Mission Campus/Rm. 211

Lifland

Emphasis on concepts of news and feature photography. Must have an SLR camera. Digital SLR preferred. Most assignments involve taking pictures of people, telling stories and conveying information. *ADVISE: PHOTO 51 OR EQUIVALENT EXPERIENCE. CSU*



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